

If all of you here will keep doing your job, if you will keep the light in the eyes of these children, if you will convince teenagers in their most difficult years that there is a country that cares about them and there is a good future for them out there, and if we do our job in Washington to keep giving communities the tools they need to bring the crime rate down, we can make the American dream live for all these young people into the next century. And 20 or 30 years from now, they can be here making their speeches, looking at another generation of young people, proud and secure in the fact that they had the chance to live out their dreams.

We have to do something about gangs and violence. We have to do something about our children being given up too young, too easily. And we know what to do. We have to do what the Girls and Boys Clubs do. We have to do what this city is doing. We have to do what

Taco Bell is doing. And we've got to keep the United States Government on the side of our children, their future, and safety in the streets with this police program. Help us do that, and we'll try to help you.

God bless you all, and thank you for having me here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:18 a.m. at the Boys & Girls Club of Santa Ana. In his remarks, he referred to Jason Reese, Boys & Girls Clubs of America 1995 national youth of the year; Mayor Miguel Pulido of Santa Ana; Kenneth T. Stevens, vice chairman, Taco Bell Foundation and member, national board of governors, Boys & Girls Clubs of America; Karina Martinez, Boys & Girls Club of Santa Ana 1995 local youth of the year; Paul Walters, chief, and John Follo, sergeant, Santa Ana Police Department; and basketball player Shaquille O'Neal.

Remarks at the O'Farrell Community School in San Diego, California September 22, 1995

Thank you so much. Let's give Henry Walker another hand. Didn't he do a great job? [Applause] I sort of want him to keep on talking; I was having a good time. [Laughter]

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for the warm welcome. Thank you, Congressman Filner. Thank you, Dr. Bertha Pendleton, for doing such a good job with this school district. Thank you, Dr. Bob Stein, the O'Farrell chief educational officer. I want to say a special word of thanks to a group of parents and teachers and students and others who help to make this school successful, who met with me for about a half an hour, before we came out here, to talk about what they were doing. I'd like to ask them to stand up and be recognized. Let's give them a hand. They gave me an education today. [Applause]

I want to say to all of you how grateful I am to this school and to all the other schools here present for believing in our children. I believe in zero tolerance, and I thank you for that. I'm trying to get every place in the country to adopt that policy. And most importantly, I believe in the high expectations that are given

to all children in this school, because all of your children can learn, and we should expect them to and help them to.

I want you to know why I came here today. You know, I like San Diego, and I came here to sign the Goals 2000 bill, and I like to be in a community that cares about education. But I wanted to come to this school today for a particular reason, and that is because O'Farrell is organized as a charter school. They call it a family. And as a school organized in this way, it's freed of a lot of the rules and regulations that keep some of our schools all across America from designing their own ways of educating children. They also are held accountable for results, and they do a good job.

I want the American people to see this because there are too many people in America that not only don't have high expectations of our students, they don't have high expectations of our schools anymore, and they don't understand how much good can be done in a good school when people are working together and they believe in their children and the promise of this future.

I have been promoting schools that are organized and operated like this school for more than 3 years now, and I asked the United States Congress to appropriate just a little money, as a part of the Goals 2000 program Congressman Filner referred to, to give schools all across America just a little start-up money if they wanted to become schools that were independent, that were energized, that were high-expectation schools like O'Farrell.

Today I'm pleased to say that the Department of Education has granted another \$6 million to open schools just like this one in 11 States across our country, including more schools in the State of California.

America has to be serious about education. We have to be serious about education if we want to have a strong economy, if we want these young people to live up to the fullest of their God-given abilities. If we really believe that our obligation to our children is to give them the ability to make the most of their own lives in the world we are living in, that means education, education, education. We must face it, embrace it, and be glad about it.

I wouldn't be President of the United States today if it weren't for the educational opportunities I had. I was raised by my grandparents until I was 4, boys and girls, and my grandfather left school after the 6th grade. But because I had a chance to go to a good school, I had a chance to get scholarships and loans and jobs to go to college, I had a chance to become President. None of it would have happened if it hadn't been for teachers like your teachers, parents like your parents, community leaders like your community leaders. It means everything, and it is more important today than it even was when I was your age. We have to give the children of this country a chance to get a good education.

There are a lot of things that have to be done here school by school, that a President can't do much about: teaching our young people to believe in themselves, organizing a system for high expectations and zero tolerance of destructive conduct, pointing out that freedom and opportunity requires a lot of personal responsibility. But I'll tell you something, there are a lot of things that we in public office can do to help. And I am tired of people in public life pointing the fingers at others and saying, you should do better, and then running away from their own responsibilities to education.

That's not the example we should be setting for our children in this country.

Just yesterday in San Francisco, I announced a breakthrough that will enable, by the year 2000, every classroom in America to be connected for computers, if we do what people in California have promised to do—business leaders—which is to wire every school in California for the Internet and to do it soon. This is the kind of thing we have to do together.

But you heard Dr. Pendleton talk about the money that these schools get from the National Government to fight for better education for these children. Don't you let anyone convince you that this money cannot be well spent to improve education. And don't you let anyone convince you that we have to cut out this money to balance the Federal budget. It is not true.

I favor balancing the Federal budget, and I have given Congress a plan to do it. I hate the fact that we were up to our ears in debt when I took office. We had a deficit of \$290 billion a year when I became President, and in 3 years we've cut it from \$290 billion to \$160 billion. I want to go all the way and balance the budget.

But why are we balancing the budget? Because we care about our children. We want to lift the burden of debt off of them. We want to have a stronger economy for them. We want America to work better. Those are our values. If those are our values, we cannot balance the budget by destroying our commitment to education. Otherwise, we won't help our children, and we won't strengthen our economy. So I say to you, my fellow Americans, we can balance the budget and increase our investment in education. And that is exactly what we ought to do.

We need to make sure our schools are safe and drug-free. We need to make sure when little children show up for school that they've been given a chance to get off to a good start. We need to make sure that schools that don't have the resources on their own can still have smaller classes and have technology and have the ability to have those higher expectations that were talked about here today. And your National Government has an obligation to help you do that. That is what I am fighting for in Washington today.

The right way to balance the budget is to balance the budget while keeping our commitments and our values to the future of our chil-

dren intact. That's what I am fighting for. You heard Congressman Filner talk about it.

The alternative budget in Washington today, proposed by the congressional majority, would undermine dramatically our commitment to education. It would cut back on our ability to promote charter schools like this one. It would cut back on our ability to help with smaller classes and more computers. It would cut back on our ability to help assure safe and drug-free schools. It would cut back on our ability to make sure little kids from poor families show up ready to learn. It would cut back on the availability of scholarships to go to college and on the availability of low-cost college loans.

Now, California has seen what happens when you cut back on the availability of people to go to college. You have a decline in enrollment in your colleges because of the cost. I want to lower the cost and increase the enrollment of ordinary Americans in a college education.

I come here to San Diego to say to you that when things are really important in America, we ought to act like a family the way the O'Farrell family works.

Education is our meal ticket to the future. Let me tell you something, folks: There's not a country in the world in a better position for the next century, for the global economy, for the rapid movement of people and money and ideas and technology around the world. No one is better suited for that than the United States, because we are the greatest country, that has people from everywhere in our country and in our communities. Look around here today and you can see that. Look around here and you can see that.

But if we are going to fulfill our potential as a nation, these children have to fulfill their potential, every one of them. We have to believe in what they can become. We have to believe they can learn. We have to insist that they do learn. We have to help them to learn. And they can learn a very great deal. We have to believe that our schools can work. And yes, we've got to embrace all these new ideas, like charter schools, but we also have to invest in them.

Before I came out here, the students were given a chance to ask me questions, and one of the students who is sitting right back there

stood up and said, "If we really care about education, how come we pay professional athletes who never get off the bench 10 times as much as the schoolteachers make?"

This is not about money. It is about our values. It's about what kind of people we are. If you believe that every person should be responsible, that every person should be a good citizen, but that every person should have the opportunity to make the most of his or her own life, then you are required to say we have obligations to each other. We owe something to each other. Yes, we can put a bunch of our money into entertainment and let those folks make a lot, but we have to invest some of our money where our values are, where our future lies, where everybody can come together.

This should not be a partisan political deal. America's existence as a great, free, democracy depends upon developing the ability of all the children who are here and the people they represent all over America. So I ask you, I ask you, without regard to your political party, your income, what you do for a living, your ethnic background, if you believe this, if you believe this, if you believe that one of these little kids could grow up to be President of the United States, with a good education, if you believe that all of these little children can assure that America will remain the strongest, greatest country in the world, if you believe it is not an accident that people here have gotten together and done something that is the envy of America in education, then I plead with you, send a message to the Congress that it shouldn't be a matter of partisan politics, we must balance the budget and invest in education to keep faith with the future of our children and the future of America.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:39 p.m. in the courtyard. In his remarks, he referred to Henry Walker, parent of an O'Farrell Community School student; Bertha Pendleton, superintendent, San Diego Unified School District; and Bob Stein, chief educational officer, O'Farrell Community School.